

THE CHURCH

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—AND—

BRETHRENISM ;

THIS pamphlet is simply the substance of four sermons preached from the same text in the churches of my parish—Church, Hillier; St. Mark's, Glenow Gore; and St. Andrew, Wellington.

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HILLIER.

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PREFACE

This pamphlet is simply the substance of four sermons preached from the same text in the three churches of my parish—Christ Church, Hillier; St. Mark's, Gerow Gore; and St. Andrew's, Wellington.

As many have expressed a wish to have these sermons published I determined to condense them all into one discourse, which, although rather long to preach, may not, it is hoped, be too tedious to read.

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The Church and Brethrenism.

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."—2nd Peter, II, 1-2.

You may have noticed it published in one of our local papers that "the Gospel of God will be preached in the town of Picton" on certain evenings which are mentioned, and by two men whose names are given.* Now if you should happen in to hear these men you would simply find yourself listening to a vigorous appeal for men to "come to Christ;" and it may be (in fact it is almost sure to be) that you would not detect a single thing in what is said that you could in any way take exception to. Yet these men are advocates of principles which can easily be shewn to be contrary to God's Word.

You may naturally ask, then, why they do not openly express these views. The reason, my brethren, is that the time has not come for them to do that here yet. They understand how to manage their cause, and they are careful not to open the flood-gates of their doctrines (which they know to be contrary to the generally accepted principles of Christianity), upon a well settled community suddenly and without preparation. They seek first to get the confidence of those who go to hear them, and then by degrees they instil into their minds doctrines which tend to subvert nearly everything which they had before been taught to hold sacred.—This is the plan they have pursued in other places, and they are commencing the process over again here.

Now we know what these men are. They call themselves "Brethren," and although their preachers do not all agree upon some points of "doctrine," yet the leading features of their principles are now pretty well known, for they can be gathered from their tracts and writings. They are, however, better known, perhaps, by the name and title of "Plymouth Brethren."

As I believe it is not generally known what the peculiar doctrines of these people are; and as I believe it to be of vital importance that people *should* know them, so as to be on their guard

*The names given are "Lord A. Cecil and Mr. Blakely."

against them, I have determined to place their doctrines before you and prove to you that they are "false and erroneous."

"At my Ordination I promised to 'banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word,' and the doctrines of these people are, in the highest degree 'erroneous, strange and contrary to God's Word.'"

The words of my text are, it is true, strong words, yet I hope to show you that, strong as they are, they apply to these people. I hope to shew you: 1st. That their doctrines are pernicious heresies; 2nd. That they "bring in these doctrines privily"; and 3rd, by implication "deny the Lord that bought them." I wish to shew you: 4th. That "many have followed their pernicious ways" and to give a reason for it; 5th. That by them "the way of truth is evil spoken of; and 6th. That their preachers are "false teachers." I shall then examine what truth really is, and where it is to be found.

In taking up these points I confess I labor under some disadvantages, because the brethren have no written creed or formula of belief from which I can prove what their doctrines really are, so I have to be content with what information I can get from their books and pamphlets, and reports of their sermons. But still they have been so often heard in this country lately, and their tracts have been so extensively circulated everywhere that their "creed" is pretty well known.*

I wish it to be observed, my brethren, that I have no desire to carry on a controversy with these people, for the simple reason that they do not receive the whole Bible as God's truth, and with such people I will never argue. I know enough of these people to be able to state that all texts which do not suit their peculiar views they reject on the grounds that they do not apply to the *present age of Christianity*. For instance, if I quote a saying of our Lord's which flatly contradicts their views they tell me that he meant that only for the Jews, or only for the Pharisees, or only for the Apostles (as the case might be,) and *not for us*; but any thing our Lord said which suits them was meant for us *as well as* for the Jews or the Pharisees or the Apostles. One of their great preachers, a Mr. Needham, was met once by a plain statement of our Lord's, which contradicted his favorite doctrine, and he got out of the difficulty by saying that our Lord at that time spoke in irony! He was not in earnest! With such people no sensible man would argue.

*See "Faiths of the World," in loc., where an admirable summary of their doctrines is given.

Any man that will tell me that what St. Paul said to the Corinthians, or Gallatians, or Thessalonians, he meant only for those people and not for the world at large, except a few passages carefully picked out and selected by himself, is beyond the reach of sound argument. Besides, who is to be the judge of this? Who is to tell what St. Paul meant locally or what he meant generally? The Plymouth Brethren? A sect you may say of yesterday!—A sect without a creed, without a ministry, without even agreement among themselves! Would they have us believe that they are the only infallible interpreters of Scripture? And would they have a people follow them so blindly that they must take *their* word, *their* dictum as to what passages are orthodox for believers, and what not? Is not this as bad, if not much worse, than Roman Catholic people who are not allowed to read any Bible but their own, and not that unless it has their own comments and explanations? It is the boast of this enlightened land that the Bible is scattered everywhere and that people are taught to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" its sacred pages—not a few, favorite book or passages but the whole complete blessed volume as it stands—and shall intelligent people consent to be led away by random preachers who will hear no Scripture except a few well-thumbed, constantly studied passages?

There is the great question which meets us at the outset. The "Brethren" are obliged to consider lots of passages inapplicable to and never meant for the present day, and so virtually reject all the Bible except what they *want* to keep. You may not notice this peculiarity in them at first; but once allow yourself to be drawn into their "chosen band," and you will find yourself an adept at explaining away or rejecting altogether passages which you now consider sacred and precious to your souls.

With such people, then, I for one will never argue, and have, therefore, no desire for controversy with them. That is not my design in making these things public. My design is to banish or keep out of my parish the heresies of a people, whose teaching is "erroneous, strange, and contrary to God's Word." And I now proceed to make this statement good. I shall begin with bringing before you their views on one of the great leading doctrines of Christianity, viz:—

I.—REPENTANCE.

I dare say, if you do not know much about these people, you will be surprised to hear that they do not believe in any such thing as repentance at all! And yet that is one of their leading doctrines. — Before a man is *saved* he *can't* repent, because he *can't* pray! They won't allow that any one can pray unless he is

"*saved*," i. e., unless he joins the "Brethren," and *after* he is saved repentance is unnecessary. Now here is an easy question in logic. Repentance is impossible *before* salvation and unnecessary afterwards. Therefore there is no such thing as repentance.

According to this, if a man comes to me and says (as I have had them say before now), "Sir, I have been a wicked man all my days, but I wish to do better, what can I do?" I am to say to him, "You can't do anything; you must simply fold your arms, stand still and see the salvation of God." And if he should say, "Can't I pray, Sir? Were I to do this, do you think God would hear me? Will he forgive me if I ask him?" I am to say, "No you can't pray! A man like you pray! You have just said you are a wicked sinner and God *hears not prayer from such as you*. You can't pray, and therefore you can't repent." And there I am to leave him, and what is the poor man to do?

Now such is the doctrine which has been taught by these revival preachers. As I said they have no written creed that I can appeal to to prove it, so I must be content with their assertions. An investigation was held not long ago by the authorities of the Presbyterian Church, at Guelph, when evidence was given that two of these revival preachers used such expressions as these, "Unconverted sinner, *I implore you not to pray*." "Except a man was *certain of salvation* his prayer was only *laughter for devils*," and that another declared that "to tell the unconverted to pray was the biggest lie ever forged on the devil's anvil." *

I am sorry the "brethren" do not choose better or more moderate language in which to express their opinions, for such sentences as the above are as shocking for you to hear as they are for me to utter; but I want to shew that I am not making these statements at random, but that I know what I say.

Now, my brethren, there is the first point which I characterize as pernicious heresy, because it is contrary to God's Word, as I shall shew by-and-by. How can men who profess to have an undying love for their fellow-creatures propound such a cold, forbidding doctrine? They profess, indeed, great reverence for our good Master, the Lord Jesus Christ; but they do not imitate him in his great sympathy for the fallen sinner. They do not imitate Him who carefully carried out what Isaiah had written of Him, "a bruised reed shall he not break and smoking flax shall he not quench." They do not imitate Him who said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," for how is a poor sinner to come except with the tears of repentance and the prayer of hope?

* See "Broken Reeds," by Rev. E. H. Dewar.

I had a man in one of my congregations once who was a most attentive attendant at church, and gave signs of yearnings for a religious life; but he shocked me one day by telling me that "*he had never prayed in his life!*" He wept over it, and said that he hoped to be a "praying man," but could not pray. What was I to tell that man? That I could not help it; or that he could not help it? That it was just as well that he could not pray, for if he did his prayer would be only laughter for devils! Was I to tell him that? Would not that have been "breaking the bruised reed," "quenching the smoking flax"? I could not bring myself to do that. I told him *he must learn to pray* before he could hope for salvation, and in that I shall soon shew I was borne out by Scripture.

You understand that prayer and repentance must go together. I mean, there cannot be genuine repentance without prayer, for repentance is more than mere sorrow for sin. It is the outpouring of a broken and contrite heart, which can only shew itself genuine by the earnest prayers that it calls forth that God will have mercy upon a miserable sinner.

And now I proceed to give you some Scripture passages, in order to clear up this great point. Our Saviour himself says: "I am not come to call the righteous but *sinner*s to repentance." (*Matt. IX., 13.*) Putting that in popular language, it is, "I am not come to call the *'saved'* but the *'unconverted'* to repentance. Surely repentance there *precedes* the call to righteousness.

St. Paul tells the elders of Ephesus that he had "testified to the Jews and also to the Greeks *repentance toward God* and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." The "Brethren" teach "faith, faith," and leave "repentance toward God" out altogether.

In the Old Testament there is this well-known text, "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed and doeth that which is lawful and right he shall save his soul alive." (*Ezek. XVIII., 27.*) Now see here before a wicked man can be saved he must *turn away from his wickedness* and live. But how can he do that unless he repents and prays for forgiveness! The "Brethren" would make the text read, "When the wicked man *believes that he is a saved man* he is a saved man" without the preliminary step of "turning from his wickedness."

I could give you scores of passages like these, but I have given enough to shew that the doctrines of Brethrenism with regard to repentance are not sound; and the theory that a man cannot pray or repent before he is a *saved man* by faith is contrary to God's word, as I have shewn. But for fear I have not been plain

enough on this point I wish to remind you of what St. Peter said to Simon who had been guilty of the crime of offering to buy God's gifts with money. Surely *he* was not one of the "saved," because he was declared to be in the *gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity*. But St. Peter wished him to become a righteous man, and what does he say? "*Repent, therefore of this thy wickedness and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*"

I do not know that anything could be plainer than this. Here we have a man caught in a crime, a crime which from him was afterwards called "Simony," and he was declared to be in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, and yet he is told to *repent and pray to God*. These preachers would have said, "Believe, believe and you are all right; but you cannot repent and above all you must not pray, for your prayers would be but laughter for devils." Now which is the right thing, what St. Peter did, or what these *brethren* do? Which is the *natural* thing? Is it a natural thing for a man all burdened with sin to be suddenly hoisted among the saved, the chosen *brethren* simply because he cries with excitement and vigor, "I believe, I believe!" Is it not more natural for a man first of all to have contrition, the broken heart, the contrite spirit, and then offer humble confession to Almighty God, and prayers (weak though they be) that God will forgive him? You would be surprised to see a plant which you considered almost dead suddenly spring up and hold its head as high as those that have been growing steadily around it for weeks; and so you might be as much surprised to see a man who yesterday was plunged in riotous living, to-day calling out he is happy because he "believes." Our blessed Saviour taught us the theory of *gradual growth in grace* when he said, "There is *first* the blade, then the ear, and *then* the full corn in the ear." At the same time we cannot deny that there is such a thing as a sudden conversion or awakening; but I say that if a man is indeed thoroughly awakened his first *natural step* will be *repentance* and earnest prayer that God will forgive him, and that natural step I have shewn to be supported by plain and outspoken texts of Scripture. The poor Publican who simply smote upon his breast and said "God be merciful to me, a sinner" (how wrong of him, according to Brethrenism, to utter any prayer in his sinful state), went down to his house justified rather than the self-righteous Pharisee who, with *fatal confidence* made his long, cold prayer to God. And this, alas! is often the case now.

It may be, my brethren, a comfortable belief that we can get on in the world without repentance, and that faith is a perfect substitute for it. It may suit those who have fierce ungovernable

temper and who care not to strive to keep them down, it may suit such to cry—"I believe, I believe," and so arrogate to themselves the position of a saint—a disciple of Jesus. It may suit the dishonest who wish secretly to carry on their "deceit upon the weights," to trample down the necessity for repentance with the shibboleth "I believe, I believe." In such cases the doctrine would certainly be found *convenient*.

I do not, (God forbid that I should,) wish to underrate or make light of *faith*,—faith in Jesus. You must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ or you cannot be saved, and you know that my voice has ever sounded that all important cry; but I wish people to take the right steps towards it. I wish them first of all to "purge out the old leaven that they may be a new lump as they are unleavened." I wish them to take the natural and scriptural step of "ceasing to do evil" before they "learn to do well." I wish the man of evil temper to govern his rage, the dishonest man to stop his dishonesty, the profligate man to curb, conquer and repent of his profligacy, and all to turn to God with deep and sorrowing repentance. Then will they be able to understand what a SAVIOUR really is.

II. FAITH.

I now come to another great leading doctrine of Christianity, viz. : *Faith*; and when you say the word faith you say the sum and substance of all the *positive* teaching, (which is very little), of Brethrenism. Their great cry is "Faith," and you would think they could not go astray while sounding such a cry as that; but, brethren, they have gone astray, even in this their great, their favorite doctrine. They *overstrain* it, and make everything else subservient to it. They assert, for instance, that Christ's glorious work of redemption was *finished and complete*, and that if we only *believe* we are put into the possession of *perfect salvation*. This means that Christ has done *all* the work of salvation and that we have ourselves *nothing* whatever to do towards it. Christ does all we do nothing. If we simply "believe" this we are all right—a holy people.

Here, for instance, is this doctrine clearly stated in one of their hymns:—

"Nothing either great or small remains for me to do;
Jesus died and paid it all, all that I was due.
When he from his lofty throne stooped to do and die,
Every thing was fully done,—'Tis finished was his cry.
Weary, working, plodding on, wherefore toil you so?
Cease, your doing, all was done, long languaged aw' expect."

*See a small work called "Truth for Believers," which is written as an explanation of the objections which have been urged against Brethrenism, but which only proves that the objections are correct.

This I take to be very false and dangerous teaching. To teach a man that he is to do *nothing* towards salvation is to teach him that he may please himself, do what he chooses, and he will be saved in the end. They give this teaching, no doubt, to avoid the doctrine of works. They shudder at the least idea of attaching the smallest importance to anything we *do*. But the importance of *works* is plainly taught in Scripture, but they pass it by, ignore it altogether while they cry, "Nothing either great or small remains for me to do." And in this they make a great mistake. The two doctrines must go together, blended harmoniously. I would not give much for a man's *works* if he has not *faith*; and I would not give much for a man's *faith* if he has not *works*. In fact the one is a natural consequence of the other. If a man has faith, true, proper faith, he cannot content himself with lying idly by and crying to himself, "Nothing either great or small remains for me to do." It is not natural. A man who teaches that doctrine can hardly preach a single sermon without contradicting himself. In fact these "Evangelists" do contradict themselves on this point, and they must do so because it is untenable ground. Here, for instance, is another of their hymns which they used when preaching lately in and about Ottawa:—

If you believe and I believe

And all together strive,

We shall the grace of God receive

And Ottawa shall revive."

Now that is a flat contradiction of the other hymn. If we are to *strive* for the grace of God it does not look like "Nothing either great or small remains for me to do." And what are we to think of people who teach one thing and sing another! Or what are we to think of them singing to-day that doing is a deadly thing, and to-morrow, we shall receive the grace of God *if we strive* for it! I say, brethren, that such are not to be trusted, for they do not seem to be able to distinguish between doctrine that is sound and scriptural, and teaching that is "strange, erroneous, and contrary to God's word."

A great many strange things follow from over-straining faith, as we shall see, as we proceed. One of these, for instance, is, that children (those dear little innocents which the Church nourishes and cares for so tenderly) cannot be saved because they have not sufficient intelligence to enable them to have faith!* One cannot help shuddering at such things as this, especially as one remembers that except we become as little children we cannot be saved.

*This (I am credibly informed) was plainly taught quite lately near Picton. Amongst other things it is well known that these people neither pray in the presence of their children, nor *teach them to pray*, because they have not sense enough to have faith!

God forbid that I should make light of Christ's glorious work of redemption. It was a stupendous work, and if we spent all our time in thanking God for it, we could not shew sufficient gratitude for all that he has done. But I wish the work of redemption to stand upon proper *Scriptural grounds*. It is not true that man has nothing to do in the work of his own salvation, and those that assert it at once get into the greatest difficulties and fall into the most grievous errors.

Our blessed Lord did all his part well. It was finished and complete; but it was *only his part*. The other part has to be performed by man, and it is a life-long struggle for him to do it. He must never relax in his watchfulness; but must ever be on his guard and *take heed lest he fall*.

"Faith, if it hath not works is dead, *being alone*." James 2. 17.) "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter unto the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven."—(Matt. vii., 21.) "Work out your own salvation with *fear and trembling*."—(Phil. ii., 12.) "Hold fast that thou hast, *that no man take thy crown*."—(Rev. iii., 11.) "Let us not be weary in *well doing*, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."—(Gal. vi., 9.)

Such is the teaching of God's word, and I say it is the *natural* teaching. It is more rational to say to a man: "Work out your own salvation, through Christ," than to say to him, "Believe only, and you have nothing to do, for Christ has done it all." It is just like the husbandman who, unless he tills the ground, will have nothing to eat. The wind, the rain, the sun, and all these things do their part, but man must also do his. So it is with salvation. Christ died for us. That was his part. Now he bids us work, and that is our part; and that part, my brethren, I am ever exhorting you to do. *Do it* and you will have every claim upon the advantages of Christ's great work of redemption.

III.—THE CHURCH.

As a consequence of *overstraining* faith in Christ, the brethren hold most extraordinary views with regard to God's Church. In the first place they assert that there was *no church on earth till Christ came*.^{*} That is to say Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the old Testament Saints never belonged to God's Church and therefore *never got Salvation*. Salvation, they say, is through Christ, therefore no one could be saved before he came.

^{*}See "Errors of the Plymouth Brethren," by Rev. J. Carnichael, of Montreal, p. 19.

Brethren, I pronounce this teaching as false and heretical as it is unnatural and unkind. I look forward to heaven as a place of great happiness, because, if I ever get there, I hope to meet these worthy patriarchs and prophets and kings whose histories now are so closely wound around our hearts; and I cannot think of people endeavouring to rule them out of all God's covenant mercies without a shudder and recoil as from the hissings of a serpent. From the time of the first death that took place in the world (that of ~~Abel~~ men have been saved and *saved through faith*. For, what is faith? "Faith is the substance of things *hoped for*, the evidence of things *not seen*" (*Heb. XI. 1.*) and it was faith like that which *saved* the men of olden times. Read the 11th chapter of Hebrews and you will see *how* Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and all these men were saved. "These all died in *faith*, not having *received* the promises but having *seen them afar off*."—(*v. 13.*)

Besides this we find the word "Church" plainly and unmistakably used in the Old Testament. If the *brethren* will consult the Septuagint* (which they are fond of appealing to) they will find the word "Ecclesia" (which is the Greek word for church, congregation or assembly) used of the church of God in the Old Testament as well as the New, and to that church the patriarchs, kings and prophets belonged; and I shall dismiss this painful subject, (for it is painful to me,) with a clear decisive statement of our Saviour himself on this point, viz: "And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west and *shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the *Children of the Kingdom* shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be *weeping and gnashing of teeth*."—(*Matt. viii., 11-12.*) Yet Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (we are now told) never belonged to the church of God.

Brethrenism also teaches erroneous views with regard to the church of Christ—the church of the New Testament. They will tell you that the visible church of Christ consists of the *saved* only, and by holding that doctrine they become a self-righteous intolerant set who believe themselves alone holy (and therefore alone the church,) on the sight of the Saviour and that all others who do not believe as they do are unholy creatures, unfit to be associated with.

In order to support this idea they will quote such a passage as *1st Cor. v. 9-11, &c.*: "I wrote unto you not to keep company with *communicants*, or *covetous*, or *extortioners*, or with *idolators*, &c., with such *no not to eat*;" and again: "Therefore put away from yourselves that wicked person."

*The Old Testament in Greek.

Now that is a well-known case; but it makes exactly *against* their own ideas, for it shews conclusively that the Church in Corinth did *not* consist of the righteous only, for if it had they would not have had these fornicators and extortioners and railers, &c., in their midst at all, and therefore would have had none to reject. St. Paul recognizes the Corinthian brethren as the Church of God, for at the beginning of this his first letter to them he calls them "*The Church of God which is at Corinth,*" and speaks of them as "*Sanctified in Christ Jesus,*" "*Called to be saints.*"—(1 Cor., i., 2.) ; and yet his whole letter is a bitter complaint against their sins, their irregularities and shameful delinquencies.* This shews that St. Paul did not consider that the Church consisted of the righteous and the "saved" only. It shews that he knew how to make allowances for the great depravity of man. He would have had a Church consisting of pure, holy, righteous people only, if such were possible here, but he knew the heart of man that his desire is only to "*do evil continually,*" and therefore he did not brand the Corinthian Church as no Church at all because they were guilty of irregularities.

It is true they were to expel from their midst the openly wicked, the profane, the licentious and not to admit them to church privileges. This was right. We do the same thing to-day, for "if any man be an open and notorious evil liver," &c., he is not to be admitted to the Lord's table until he become a thorough penitent.† But that is a different thing from saying that the church must consist of the holy only. Our Saviour likens the kingdom of heaven or his church to a net which is cast into the sea which gathered of all kinds, both good and bad. He likens it to a field in which the wheat and tares grow together till the harvest, but brethrenism would not wait for that. Its votaries separate the wheat from the tares themselves,—they themselves being the wheat and all other poor deluded creatures, the tares.

In Acts II, 47, we are told that "the Lord added to *the church* such as *should be saved*, i. e. (as the Greek word means) were being saved or were *on the road to salvation*.‡ This is different from being saved *first* and then added to the church.

The church has a work to do against the evil influences of the

*See "Heresies of the Plymouth Brethren," by Rt. Rev. Dr. Lewis, Bishop of Ontario.

† See Rubric at commencement of Holy Communion Office in the Prayer Book.

‡ I am aware that the brethren make a distinction between the "church" and the "kingdom," but after careful study of it I can not help regarding it a distinction without a difference.

devil : She has to draw all within her fold that she possibly can and place before them salvation through Christ. If they should fall away and not live up to their membership, and if they should die in that state, there is the melancholy spectacle of members of the visible church forfeiting the position which they were by right entitled to. That is the simple fact of the case ; but for men to judge as to who are the saved and who are not, and to consider themselves *the church* simply because they say they have more faith than other human beings is an act of intolerance which sensible people can not be expected to be guided by. Any people who will say, "Stand by thyself, come not near me ; for I am holier than thou," (Is. LXV, 5), ought to be able to give a very good reason for holding such ground. But what reason do they give." Simply they *believe* and we don't ; and they constitute themselves judges in the matter and so consider themselves the salt of the earth, whilst all others are the refuse and the vile and are not in any way to be associated with "no not to eat."

IV.—THE MORAL LAW.

When people once hold false doctrine it is surprising to note the number of evil consequences which follow from it. Brethrenism teaches that Christ has done *all* the work of salvation, and as a consequence of this it *has* to teach (as we have seen it does) that the church consists of the "saved" only. And as a consequence of *this* again they are obliged to teach (as they do) that the members of this "church," i. e., themselves, are not bound by the Moral Law,—the law of Moses.* Christ, they say, has discharged every debt that stood out against us, therefore, we are for ever delivered from the condemning power of the law. In plain language then, these people reject at least the ten commandments as not binding upon Christians ; and if we could be satisfied that their teaching in this matter is correct, I must say I think it would be a very easy matter for us all to become good Christians.

In order to support this idea, they take (as in every thing else) one or two texts which suit them and you can not get them to see one iota beyond them. They quote, for instance, Rom. vii, 6, "But now we are *delivered from the law*, that being dead wherein we are held ; that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." That is true enough. The ancient Jew was justified if he kept the letter of the law ; but he might keep it from fear only, fear of penalty. In that sense the law is dead to us. A man may be exceedingly honest and upright, may keep all the commandments outwardly with most scrupulous attention, and yet in the sight of God he may be a stranger. He may

* See "Truth for Believers," p. 72.

not even realize that he has a Saviour, so that our *motive* in keeping the commandments is of importance in the sight of God. You keep the commandments, do you? You don't steal, you don't take God's name in vain, you don't commit adultery, you don't murder and all that. But *why* is it that you don't do these things? "Oh! because they lead to punishment and disgrace, and if I don't do them I shall be respected as a good neighbor and an honest man." "Is that your only motive?" "Well, yes I think so." "Then the law in itself is *dead* to you. You must serve 'in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter,' for the law of *itself* is not all that is required of us Christians."

That is all that that text can honestly be made to teach; but that is a far different thing from saying that a saint, a righteous man is not bound by the commandments. That is a statement which naturally leads to the most pernicious results. What do they mean by it? Do they mean, that if a man is a *believer* (if he joins the *brethren*) he may break the commandments with impunity? Do they mean that he is not bound by a law against murder, adultery, blasphemy, covetousness, theft and such things? I can hardly think they mean that, and yet it follows naturally from the doctrines they lay down. "Yes but," they will say, "a true Christian will not break the commandments, for the love of his Saviour will keep him from these things. That is true to a certain extent; but still that does not release the true Christian from the *obligation* to keep the law; and I assert again that to teach people that after "conversion" they are not bound by the Moral Law (the ten commandments) is strange doctrine and logically leads to the most pernicious results.

I now proceed to shew that while it is "strange" it is also "erroneous and contrary to God's word."

St. Paul, in Rom. III, 31, says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? *God forbid*. Yea we **ESTABLISH THE LAW.**" Brethrenism does not establish the law. It destroys it as being not binding upon Christians. In fact it does the very thing which St. Paul said he would not do (God forbid that he should), i. e., "make void the law through faith." I could not believe that faith should be strained to such an extent as this. True faith in Jesus is lovely, but to *force* it so as to exclude everything else, even repentance and the moral law is extraordinary.

But what did our blessed Lord himself say about this matter? "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets," He once said, (Matt. V, 17), "I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you till heaven and earth pass away one jot or one tittle *shall in no wise pass from the law* till all be

fulfilled." Brethrenism does not seem to understand these plain, these solemn words of the Saviour, for if it did it would pay some regard to what follows, viz: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, but whosoever shall *do and teach them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Thank God then the church does teach men to keep the commandments, and in doing so she follows her Lord's teaching. But why need I give more passages, when the two I have quoted are direct contradictions of the doctrine of Brethrenism on this point? But why do they, in the face of such plain texts, hold such views? Why do they, in the face of common reason—for I hold it to be the most rational thing in the world that the better a man is the greater is his obligation to keep the commandments and the more careful he ought to be to do it—why do they in the face of common reason teach men such doctrines as these? What object have they in view in rejecting the Moral Law of Moses? Is it not contrary to the very "A, B, C," of religious principles? Are they not people on whom there must be some strong delusion? Who can persuade men into rational, scriptural views when they reject such plain teaching as that of Moses? I fear no one, for a greater than any on earth—the blessed Saviour himself has endorsed the following words—"If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead!"

V.—THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Another result of considering themselves "saved finally" because they belong to "the church" through faith, is that they reject the Lord's Prayer as a thing not to be used by Christians! The Lord's Prayer, they say, was given to meet the individual wants of the disciples and was not meant to be continued amongst Christians after the shedding abroad of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. I need not say, brethren, that there is not a hint of this in God's Word, and I ask, Would the Saviour have given that beautiful prayer simply to mislead us? If he had never intended us to use it would he not have told us so? Would he not have said to his disciples, "I give you a prayer to use *now*, but hereafter you will be too holy and righteous to use it, so you must be careful when that time comes to use it no longer?" I say, if that was to be the case our Lord would have warned his disciples of it, or at least would have hinted at it. But there is not the smallest hint of anything of the sort. On the contrary a little common sense thought on the matter will shew us that the Lord meant his prayer to be used by all his followers in every age of the world.

both as a public and private form of devotion. For what are the facts with regard to the delivery of this prayer ?

We find that our Saviour gave it to his disciples on two separate occasions, separated one from the other by a considerable space of time. The first time that he gave it was in his famous Sermon on the Mount when he delivered to his disciples the new principles which through him were to be the guide of men's lives. And every word contained in that precious Sermon on the Mount is sacred to the lover of Christ, and who is there that shall say that there is any one of those blessed principles which the Saviour did not mean to be followed by Christians of every age and Christians in every clime ? Oh ! I say, meddle with any part of God's word (if it must be meddled with) rather than with the direct teachings of the divine Redeemer, for he taught just what the human heart wanted, and just what the burdened soul, struggling with the trials of a sinful world yearns for. And of all his teachings, Oh ! touch not his Sermon on the Mount, for in it he lays down his *distinctive teaching*, as different from all other teaching that had ever existed on earth. It contains, you may say, the whole Gospel which from that time on to the end of the world was to be the guide of men's lives ; and I think it is one of the most melancholy evidences of the weakness and short-sightedness of man that we have in our midst men, professing to be brimming over both love for Jesus and faith in his holy name and yet tampering with his most sacred words, picking out just what suits them and rejecting the rest as not applicable to them !

Ah ! but this is a serious matter. I do not suppose there is a single verse in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount which has not been preached upon over and over again by Ministers of Christ and held up to their people as the loveliest precepts which could possibly be the guide of their lives. And now this it seems is all wrong. We have men who say that our Lord's teaching was not all meant for us, and amongst this is the prayer known by his name !

It is worth while then to observe *how* our Lord gave this prayer. In the midst of his sermon he says, (Matt. VI, 7), "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions *as the heathen do* ; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye, therefore, like unto them. * * * After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven, &c. Now there is the *Christian* prayer in opposition to the heathen, which was full of vain repetitions, and yet that Christian prayer it is that Brethrenism rejects. It was given, mind you, at a time when Christ was laying down the principles which from that time forth were to be the guide of men's lives.

But we also find that our Lord gave this prayer a *second time*. In Luke XI we are told; "as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased one of his disciples said unto him, Lord teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples,"—and what does he say? The very same words that he had given them before, "When ye pray say Our Father which art in Heaven," &c. And this time it was given, oh! at such a solemn time, just as our Lord had ceased praying—ceased holding communion with his Father. Then with his mind full of heavenly thought—full of the practical need of prayer—he gives his disciples *no new prayer*, but the same excellent little form which he had advised them to use before.

It is true there is a slight difference in the wording of the two, and the second time our Lord leaves off the doxology, "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory," &c. No doubt he did this in order to shew that this prayer could be used privately as well as publicly. The doxology, which was used in public worship, authorized the *public* use of the prayer. Omitting it authorized its use in private, and this is what the disciples the second time seemed to ask for. So that our Lord authorized the use of this prayer both publicly and privately, and, as there is not the slightest hint that it was meant only for temporary use, is it not plain enough that it is lawful and right to use it at the present day?

In all these subjects I am dealing only with Scripture, for I wish to shew this new Gospel that we are gratuitously treated to "contrary to God's word"; but were I to appeal to the early writers of Christianity I could shew that in every age of the Church the Lord's prayer has been used publicly and privately,—used in its own simple form, and also as the model upon which all forms of prayer were afterwards built. And now are we told by self-constituted preachers that the Lord's prayer is unfit for believers to use! And they have no passage of Scripture to support this idea. It is simply a grave—an awful assumption. They assume that our Lord made a mistake in not cautioning believers against his own prayer. Is not that an astounding delusion? Why is that beautiful prayer attached now after so many centuries of use all over the world? Why is it attacked when Scripture tells us plainly that it was given *twice*, and one of the occasions on which it was given was when our Lord was laying down the principles by which, for the future, the world was to be governed?

But I dare say you are wondering in your minds what there is in the Lord's prayer that these people can possibly object to. Why do they reject it?

The fact is they *must* reject it, in order to be true to their own principles. They say that after they believe they are a holy, sanc-

tified people, not even bound by the moral law, and therefore it would be most out of place for them to pray to God to *forgive them their trespasses*. It follows from this that they think they never commit any trespasses at all ! Oh ! let them take heed.—“If a man *think himself to be something* when he is nothing he deceiveth himself.” (*Gal. vi., 3.*) “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” (*1st Cor., x., 12.*) “If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us, but if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to *forgive us our sins* and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (*1st John, i., 8-9.*)

Are these people better than St. Paul who declared to the Corinthians, “I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others *I myself should be a castaway.*” (*1st Cor., ix., 27.*) These men have no such fears as that, for they never even have to ask God to forgive them their sins !

Are they better than St. Paul again when he declared, ‘I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) *dwelleth no good thing*, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; *but the evil which I would not that I do.* * * * I find then a law that when I would do good evil is present with me” (*Rom. vii., 18, &c.*)

Are they better than St. Peter who we know fell so often into humiliating sins ? Perhaps they will say all St. Peter's faults were committed before his conversion; but I am not so sure of that.—Surely St. Peter was a converted man on and after the day of Pentecost, when, through his preaching three thousand souls were added to the Church of Christ, and yet, *long after that*, we find St. Paul reproving St. Peter at Antioch and “withstanding him to the face, *because he was to be blawed,*” (*Gal. ii., 11*) and if St. Peter was to be blamed, as St. Paul clearly shewed he was, is it likely that he never prayed, “Father, forgive me my trespasses” ?

Brethren, it seems absolutely unnecessary to dwell upon such an extraordinary assumption of holiness as this. It is beyond all reason. Too holy to say the Lord's prayer ! Oh ! God grant that I may be only able and willing to say the Lord's prayer all my days !

VI.—THE HOLY GHOST.

We are not surprised to find a people who consider themselves too holy to say the Lord's Prayer, asserting that it is wrong to ask for God's Holy Spirit because it is a thing that they always have

with them. "The Spirit" they say having been once given it is mockery to ask God to *repeat the gift*.*

Now, my brethren, they might as well say that we should never ask God for Grace. Since they refuse to pray for the spirit on the grounds that it has once been given (which I suppose was at "conversion") it follows that they do not deem it possible that God's spirit can ever be *withdrawn*; and this is unscriptural. What St. Paul says to the Ephesians (IV. 30), viz. "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" only prepares us for the warning he gives the Thessalonians, *Quench not the spirit* (1. Thess. v. 19), and both of these tend to explain the feelings of David when, in the well-known 51st psalm he cries out "Cast me not away from thy presence and *take not thy holy spirit from me*." (v. 11). And I think these passages shew clearly that it is a possible thing for God's Holy Spirit to be withdrawn, and therefore it can not be mockery to pray to God for it. We want daily, hourly supplies of God's Holy Spirit; and this we are to ask for, as our Saviour plainly teaches when he says:—"If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." (Luke xi. 13.)

They assert also that it is wrong to pray to the Holy Ghost. Why they hold this belief is not clear, but it is most unscriptural in as much as the Holy Ghost is plainly represented in Scripture as God, and this they don't deny. In fact the writer in "Truth for Believers" (p. 48) asserts that he does not admire the expression "second person" or "third person" in the Trinity because it tends to bring in a *subordination* in the Godhead where scripture does not: and yet it seems that though they consent to pray to God the Father and God the Son it becomes "almost blasphemy" to pray to God the Holy Ghost.

This is so contradictory that it requires no further observation. Any one who acknowledges that the Godhead consists of three *Persons, each by himself* God must own the propriety of addressing each one of the three in prayer, or else he outrages common reason, —a thing which these people often do.

Let them be careful how they slight the Holy Ghost. We ought to be very careful in speaking of Him, for it has been solemnly said by the Saviour, "whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world neither in the world to come." (Matt. xii 32.)

* See a tract called the "Holy Spirit and Prayer."

VII.—THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

On the same principle that the Christian is free from the moral law, and must not say the Lord's Prayer, the Brethren teach that he is also under no obligation to keep the Lord's day holy—a least more holy than any other day. Every day, they say, is Sunday to them. "The ancient Sabbath has been done away with and to a Christian every day is alike." Now there is truth in that mixed up with error. The Hebrew word *Sa-bath* simply means *to rest*, the Sabbath day is the *rest day*, the day of rest; and the only great difference between the ancient and present observation of the Sabbath or rest day is that we keep it on Sunday whilst the Jews kept it on Saturday. It is true then that the keeping of the day of rest on *Saturday* has been done away with,—but why done away with? That there might be no more rest days no more Sabbaths? No, but that it might be placed upon Sunday the first day of the week, that day ever so glorious, ever so blessed to Christians because, on it, our Lord rose from the dead. And we have every reason to conclude this from scripture. We read that, "*upon the first day of the week* when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, (Act XX, 7). We also read that St. John was in the spirit *on the Lord's day*," (Rev. I, 10), and since the Sunday is called the Lord's day, and since we read of the disciples coming together for worship and communion on that day, and never particularly on any other day, we conclude reasonably that it is more suitable as well as scriptural for the Christian to keep his Sabbath on the Sunday instead of Saturday. But brethrenism does not even allow this. It would sweep away the observation of the Sabbath *altogether*, on the grounds that to the Christian every day should be alike.

It is true that, in one sense, every day *should* be alike to Christians. They should never lay aside their armour, but they should carry prayer, the "prayer without ceasing" into the office, the field and the workshop; and this would tend to heighten their enjoyment of the Lord's Day, because on it they could devote *special* time to the service of God; but when we have men speaking *against* the keeping of the Christian Sabbath, then I say we should have nothing to do with them but leave them to preach to those who are fond of novelty and change.

For what would be the result if their teaching on this point should be carried out? The result they *expect* is that *every day would be kept holy*, but they would soon find that the true result would be that *we would have no holy day at all*. I know, brethren, there is too much Sunday religion amongst us. I know that too many people try to crowd all their religion into Sunday and

that they think if they attend strictly to all their duties on that day, they are free to lay it aside for their farm, or their merchandise, or their pleasures, or their gayeties. But nevertheless, do away with the *obligation* to keep the Lord's Day and you will soon find every land-mark of religion swept away and buried far down amidst the whirl and bustle of a busy money-making world. Aye, destroy the obligation to keep Sunday and you will find even the *brethren* themselves loudly calling out they "believe," they "believe," and yet working and toiling away, never even giving a day to God while they cry that to a Christian every day should be alike. Why do they speak against the keeping the Lord's day holy? Would they have us work and toil and slave on that day the same as on all the rest, or would they have us rest every day as we do on Sunday and do no work at all? One of these two things must be done, for if every day is alike it will be lawful for us to work every day, or else, if work be improper we must never work at all. But men *will* work, they *must* work; and it may be well enough for men who have nothing else to do but to go about from place to place telling people that the doctrine and principles of Christianity which have been held by the church universal for over 1800 years, *are all wrong*—it may do very well for such to say that to a Christian every day should be alike. Every day is alike to them, for they have abundant means to enable them to do no work from one week's end to the other; but for people who have to toil hard for daily bread and who have to earn their living by the "sweat of their face," it is not so easy to keep every day alike. How *are* they to keep every day alike? They must either work every day or rest every day, and whichever they do tends to misery. I mean no irreverence when I say that a man can not earn his living by keeping every day holy, i. e., as a holy day ought to be kept. Therefore, if men attempt that, they will starve and the commerce and business of the world will be stopped. And what then is the inevitable conclusion from this? Why since men *must* work and since the business and commerce of the world *must* go on, it follows that if there is no distinction of days (if every day is alike) there must be one ceaseless round of business and work and toil; and the result of that would be that we would soon have a haggard, worn out community and the period of man's life would be shortened. It is well known that in those countries where the Sabbath is not observed the people soon wear out, for when all days are alike, they work incessantly. No good result can come from this teaching. Instead of making every day holy, as they vainly hope, the one holy day that we have will be drawn down into the vortex of the world with its toils and pleasures, and strangled there.

It was God's decree that on every seventh day people should rest and that the day should be kept holy, and although we do not actually keep the old Jewish Sabbath, still we follow out the spirit of God's direction and *keep every seventh day holy*. And this is a beautiful arrangement—an arrangement made in God's wisdom for man's good. The man who works hard either with his hand or brain requires stated periods of rest, and the brightest ray of comfort that crosses his weary path is the Lord's day's rest, and if he loves the Lord Jesus it is a beautiful and most beneficial change for him to meet on that day his fellow-men and join in *special* services to God. The sound of the church going bell has its music to those who, through the rest of the week are obliged to work and toil.

This, I say, is a practical, natural way to look at this question, and it is also Scriptural. To quote the 4th commandment to a people who reject the commandments altogether would be useless, but to you, my brethren, I may quote it and I may feel assured that you will consider it your duty ever, as I know you do now, to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and I am sure it is much better to trust to the well tried usage of Christianity, which can now boast of a hoary antiquity, than to fly to the visionary ideas of fanatical people who would seek to pull us up to an impossible standard.

VIII.—THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

I now pass on to one of the leading doctrines of Brethrenism and perhaps it is the only doctrine on which we find strict agreement amongst the various shades of belief that exist in its fold. They utterly repudiate all idea of an ordained ministry. They hold that there is no such thing as ordination taught in Scripture, and that any one may start off and preach on the sole authority of an *inward call* or a direction by the spirit to do so. On this doctrine they practice for they have no ministers, no ecclesiastical organization. A man may be a soldier to-day and a preacher to-morrow, and his word is expected to be *law* in the interpretation of the Scripture. In fact some of them lay claim to supernatural ability and gifts of the spirit which enable them to be unerring, infallible scripturists. But at once there arises the important question, *How do we know they are under the guidance of the spirit?* Can they perform miracles to assure us of the fact? We have never heard of any. And yet they pretend to superior gifts. But they have only *their word* to give you for it. That is their sole authority, but alas! we can not always depend upon men's words. Men may be deceivers; men may be deficient in common judgment, or monomaniacs, or altogether insane. I do

not say that they *are*, but I say they *may be*; and the more men lay claim to supernatural gifts the more I am inclined to think these things of them. And how are they going to assure me to the contrary? Mahomet laid claims to supernatural gifts, but he made no progress until political events favored him. Then he took up the sword, and by the help of it and frightened fanatical soldiers he propagated his peculiar theories; but they have turned out to be one of the biggest mistakes that the world has ever been cursed with. So we have to be careful in dealing with people who pretend to have supernatural gifts, even as Scripture tells us, "Beloved, *believe not every spirit* but try the spirits whether they are of God; because *many false prophets are gone out in the world* (1, John, iv, 1). And how are we to know that the spirit which a man professes to have is of God? We want something more than a man's word for it, or else we can not submit to him as a guide or a teacher.

But I deny their statement that men may preach on the authority of an *inward call* only. It is not the plan we find laid down in Scripture. You find there that men were called to God's work *externally*. They did not first offer themselves, but they were called and hidden to come. Was there ever a better or more holy man of God than Elisha, and yet how was he called to his work? He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen one day and Elijah the prophet passed by and simply threw his mantle over Elisha's shoulders, and "Elisha then arose and went with Elijah." (1st Kings, *etc.*, 19.) God wanted Elisha to do his work, yet observe the steps He took to get him. He did not simply *operate upon his heart* so that Elisha should come of his own accord and preach and prophesy, but he commanded his properly authorized prophet Elijah to go and anoint "Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah to be prophet in his room." (v. 16.) Aaron was called to the priesthood externally. Jonah was called externally to go and preach to the Ninevites, and so far was this from being an *internal call* that Jonah tried his best to *evade* the commission, yet God forced him to go. And when we come to the New Testament we find that our blessed Lord always called men *externally* to go and do the work of the ministry. He saw Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom; he said to him, "follow me." He saw Peter, James and John fishing in the waters of Genessaret, and he said to them, "follow me." And it is a remarkable thing that *when men offered of their own accord* to follow him he refused them. A certain man said to him, "Lord I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." (Luke *etc.*, 57.) Another said, "Lord I will follow thee but let me first go and bid them farewell that are at home at my house." But in both these cases

our Lord seems to have demurred and declined their offer. But he says immediately after to another, "follow me"; and although he hesitated on the grounds that he wished first to go and bury his father, Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their dead, but *go thou and preach the Kingdom of God.*" There was an external call even when the man faltered and hesitated. This was the Saviour's undeviating rule. He did not operate only upon the inward spirit of a man, but he commissioned him externally to go and preach the word.

But after our Saviour's ascension into heaven, what do we find the rule? Why men were still called to the ministry externally. The very first thing that the Apostles did was to look about for a successor to Judas Iscariot who had hanged himself. And how did they do it? Did they wait till some one came and said he was "inwardly moved" by the spirit to take his place? No, but they appointed two, and out of the two they ELECTED *one to take the post.* And yet Brethrenism asks, "Where is there an instance of an election to the ministry in the New Testament?" * I say *there is one as plain as plain can be.* The one hundred and twenty disciples cast their votes and elected Matthias to the Apostleship, or first rank of the ministry, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.†

Take again the case of St. Paul. How was he called to the ministry? Miraculously it is true. He was struck down, and Jesus spoke to him from heaven. But even that was an external call for the men that were with him "*heard the voice, but saw no man.*" Yet Paul did not preach until *Ananias came to him* that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. (*Acts ix., 17.*)

And so, search the Bible as you will, you will find that prophets and priests and kings and deacons and ministers and preachers of all kinds received their commission externally and through man's agency. Therefore the plan these "evangelists" of to day adopt of preaching on their own responsibility without any external appointment, commission or ordination is contrary to all the examples we have in scripture.

"But" say they, "there is no such thing as an ordained ministry taught at all!" This I pronounce a flat contradiction of God's word. I will simply refer you to Ephes. iv. 11-15. "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors

*See "Truth for Believers," p. 93-94. On p. 94 we find this sentence, "It is ignorant and evil meddling for the Church to elect."

†See Acts I., 23.

and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, *for the work of the ministry*, for the edifying of the body of Christ * * * That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with *every wind of doctrine*, by the sleight of men and cunning, craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Here, we have apostles, teachers, pastors &c. given for the work of the ministry, and now we see the use of them. They are to protect their people against "every wind of doctrine" which is not scriptural and orthodox.

But so far from there being no ordained ministry taught in the Bible, we have frequent instances of ordination, and we can plainly discover *three ranks of ministers*, corresponding to our own, Bishops, Priests and Deacons. The Apostles, of course, were the first rank, and Matthias was elected to fill a vacancy in that rank. The next order were the Presbyters (Elders), or Bishops, as they were called then, and they were appointed to their places by ordination. St. Paul says to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou mightest *ordain Elders* (Presbyters) in every city." He tells Timothy to "*lay hands suddenly on no man*." He tells him what a Bishop is expected to be in the church, and how he is expected to conduct himself. He tells him also of the qualifications necessary for a Deacon, which is the *third* or lowest order of the ministry. He tells him to neglect not the gift which is in him, *by the laying on of his hands*—not by an internal feeling only but by the *laying on of his hands*—and of the hands of the Presbytery or Eldership. St. Paul (1st rank) in writing to the Philippian addresses his letter to the "saints which are at Philippi, with the Bishops (2nd rank) and Deacons (third rank)." And yet in the face of all this and a great deal more that might be adduced, self-constituted preachers, without any authority, commission or ordination whatever, are now crying down the office of God's ministers as unscriptural. They might as well say that the Bible itself is unscriptural, for it abounds from Genesis to Revelation in proofs that in God's church there was always a regularly appointed ministry.

And such a ministry we want. When you hear a man preach, you ought to ask yourself the question *what right has he to preach to me?* A man must have a commission to do it, and if you ask me where he is to get it, I say from God's properly ordained ministers, who have received their position direct from Christ and the Apostles. I can shew you such a commission, and I can *prove to you* that the man who gave it to me, had every authoritative and Apostolic right to give it which it is possible for mortal man to have. And

*See Acts I, 23.

that is scriptural, and I say it is natural too, and reasonable. If a man came to you and said, "I arrest you in the Queen's name," you would naturally ask him to shew his authority or commission to do so; and unless he has the proper document, and from a proper source, you would refuse to let him take you. It is exactly so in delivering the great message of the gospel. The Church must have some protection, or people will never know what gospel is being preached, and their great protection is that her ministers must have proper commission to do their work.

The ministerial office is a sacred one. "No man *taketh this honor unto himself*, but he that was *called of God as was Aaron*. (Heb. v. 4) When then we find people flinging to the winds the most sacred office that God has established on earth, it is little wonder that they teach doctrines which are "erroneous, strange, and contrary to God's Word."

CONCLUSION.

I now proceed to wind up all the points that I have mentioned above. I am well aware that some of the *brethren* would deny some of the things I have dwelt upon, (although they are drawn directly from their own writings), because they have no agreement among themselves. Every one does as he likes, and the consequence is that every one preaches what doctrine he likes, and so, when we put their teaching all together we get a mass of erroneous and strange teaching which is contrary to God's word and which common reason can not but repudiate. At the same time I do not believe these men are trying to do mischief *on purpose*. That they *do* do mischief is certain, because the tendency of their preaching is first to excite people and then unsettle them altogether. But I am far from thinking that their *object* is to do harm. I have no doubt they *think* they are right. I am told they are very earnest in what they say. I have no doubt of it. I believe that they have got to such a point that they consider it their bounden duty to try and get all men to be "altogether as they are," and if that is their idea they can not help being in earnest. If they think Christianity has gone all wrong, which their writings clearly shew that they do; and if they think they are the chosen vessels to set it all right again, which they evidently do, I do not wonder at their being in earnest. *But their earnestness is no proof that their cause is good.* Men have been intensely earnest before now in advocating most pernicious things; and so men may become so devoted to a cause that they will be blind to everything else but it and then they can not help being in earnest in advocating it. But when we hear men making the serious statement that the principles and doctrines by which the Church Universal has been governed for hundreds

of years are a delusion, a fatal mistake, then I say such must be prepared to have their statement challenged, and to make good their position by "many infallible proofs," which is a thing they have utterly failed to do.

St. Paul tells the Corinthians that there *must* be *heresies* (i. e. false doctrines) among them, that "they which are approved may be made manifest among them," and so these false doctrines which are taught in our very midst may serve a good purpose. If they tend, by being held out in contrast to true church principles to strengthen you, my brethren, to build you up in your most holy faith, then a good object will have been attained. When we find what is called the "gospel of God" coupled with a series of unscriptural errors, then I say it ceases to be what it is called, and people should avoid it altogether. And this is the case with these preachers. I do not wish to be hard upon them, for though much mistaken and sadly led away, I believe they think they are doing good and are in earnest; but I do wish to deal very plainly with their doctrines, which indeed I think I have done.

When I find people rejecting portions of God's word, and only keeping what suits them; when I find them teaching that a man can't pray till he is saved, and therefore can't repent; when I find them stating that the work of salvation was done by Christ alone and that man has nothing to do towards it himself; when I find them declaring that Christ's church consists of the saved only; when I find them holding that a "converted" man can never fall from grace, and therefore is not bound by the moral law, must never say the Lord's prayer, because it is out of place for him to ask God to forgive his sins, and must not ask for God's Holy Spirit, because when once given it can never be taken away; when I find them refusing to pray to the Holy Ghost although they acknowledge Him to be God, co-eternal and co-existent with God the Father and God the Son; when I find them teaching that God had no church on earth till Christ came and that therefore Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Old Testament worthies never received salvation; when I find them trying to do away with the Lord's Day's rest, the Christian Sabbath, and to make all days alike; when I find them crying down an ordained ministry as a thing earthly and not of God, then I can not refrain lifting up my voice against them. I feel very jealous for the true cause of God, and "for Zion's sake will I not hold my peace and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

Now you may remember that at the commencement of this subject, I stated that the words of my text can be proved to apply to

these people; and there are several points in it which I wish to dwell upon in connection with the doctrines of Brethrenism.

I. St. Peter tells us that "as there were false prophets among the people, so there shall be false teachers among us," and these "evangelists" I take to be false teachers. The office of a preacher (or proclaimer) of God's word is a holy and sacred one, and therefore men, to occupy it, should be properly commissioned. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is *called of God*; but how called? Not *internally* only but *externally* "*as was Aaron*" (*Heb. v., 4*) i. e., by a proper commission and authority.— "How can people hear," says St. Paul, (*Rom. x., 14-15*) without a preacher? and how shall they preach *except they be sent?* And who is to send them now? Clearly God's proper officer in the church must send them with an external commission or otherwise, they become false, unauthorized teachers.

II. Since, then, they are "false teachers" it is little wonder that their doctrine is found to be false. St. Peter says of false teachers that they shall "privily bring in damnable heresies." When the Bible was translated the word "damnable" was in common use. It was used of anything that deserved censure, and therefore the heresies spoken of by St. Peter are simply those which deserve censure. Now if you look at Gal. v., 19-21, you will find heresy classed with the worst kind of sins, such as even murder, adultery or theft. Therefore it is something that we have to be very careful to avoid. And since heresy is false doctrine, the views inculcated by "Brethrenism" are clearly heresies. Is it not heresy, for instance, to teach people not to ask for God's Holy Spirit? Is it not heresy to tell "believers" that it is out of place for them to say the Lord's Prayer or to feel bound by the ten commandments?— And so I might ask with regard to all the other points I have mentioned. And if these are not heresies, then it is clear that I do not know what heresy means.

III. I wish also to attract your attention to the word "*privily*" mentioned in our text. They bring in these heresies privately; and this it is well known these people do. They begin by preaching "Come to Christ," and their addresses are of a stirring and reviving nature, and people are carried away by them especially as they do not notice anything wrong in their doctrine. But after their minds are drawn towards them in this way they begin cautiously to inculcate their peculiar tenets. When once a person cries "I believe," or when, according to their expression, he has "found Christ," he is gradually told that he must no longer acknowledge himself to be a miserable sinner, because he is a happy Christian; he must no longer use the Lord's Prayer and so on until

he becomes master of true Brethrenism. And then that person is well skilled in thinking himself and a few others righteous and *despising others*. Many of their doctrines they do not preach openly. They reserve them for the better instruction of the *Brethren*. This I call bringing in doctrines "privately."

IV. The next statement in the text is that they "deny the Lord that bought them." It may seem strange to accuse a people whose watchword is "Come to Christ," of denying the Lord who bought them, yet some of their doctrines certainly do this. They have loaded belief in Jesus with such a number of curious doctrines that He is not held up in a proper light before men. We may well say of them, "They have taken away our Lord, and we know not where they have laid him." People who refuse to do what our Lord commanded are guilty of denying him. And this is their case. Jesus said, "I am not come to *destroy* the law"—they say the law is destroyed through faith. Jesus said, "when ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven," &c. They say this prayer is not to be used. Jesus said, "the Sabbath is made for man"—they say that to a Christian there is no Sabbath, for every day is alike. Jesus said, "Baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost"—they (at least some of them), if they baptize at all, do so *in the name of Jesus only*. Jesus said, "your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day," and he saw it and was glad" (*John viii., 56*)—they say Abraham never belonged to the Church of God at all! Jesus said, "*except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish*"—(*Luke xiii., 5*)—they say that men can't repent till they are fully saved. And so we see there are many things in which they differ altogether from the teaching of the Saviour, and when they do that they do what perhaps they little suspect, "deny the Lord that bought them."

V. The text then goes on to say, "many shall follow their pernicious ways"; and this we find to be a fact with regard to Brethrenism. If it were not that many people in different places have been misled by them I should hardly have thought their teaching worth notice, for it abounds with so many errors; but when I find that some of the best among our own church people have been gradually drawn by them away from the church, so that they would consider themselves guilty of a great sin by being found now in her midst at all, and when I reflect that many were drawn towards these preachers by listening to their revival sermons and not knowing the doctrines they would afterwards be expected to hold, it seems to me the bounden duty of every clergyman to give his people a timely warning. Many have followed their ways and in quarters sometimes where it was least expected. We find this to be a fact and I promised to give a reason for it.

The first reason is the intense earnestness of the preachers.— Though their doctrines are false as false can well be, yet we must give them credit for earnestness, and this attracts. Then again, they sound the most lovely cry of the gospel, "come to Christ."— They are in earnest in this. They want men to find Christ, and no one could want men to do that more than I. I would to God men knew Christ more than they do. I would to God every one would hie him to Jesus,—

"While the gathering waters roll,
While the tempest still is high."

But though they certainly have zeal in this respect, they have not according to knowledge. Their only idea of "coming to Christ" is to renounce all former professions and to be joined to themselves. But this is often not found out till it is too late, and people who were simply attracted by the cry, ever fresh, ever lovely, "come to Christ," find themselves in the midst of doctrines attractive in themselves, but different from all the teachings they had received in their life-time before. These are some of the reasons of their success; but there is another and perhaps (in the case of some) a more powerful one. These preachers are generally men in some high station in life, and by this means they gain ready access to the ear and to the heart of the people, who are in the same position as themselves, or who aim at reaching it. This weighs I am sorry to say, a great deal with the religious principles of some people. And this is the way it is that the brethren sometimes "creep into houses, and lead captive silly women" (2nd Tim., iii. 6), who, alas! are too often followed by the men.

When then you combine high social standing with apparent zeal and earnestness and love for Christ, you have the reason why "many follow their pernicious ways." But you may ask, why do you apply the word pernicious to them, when they seem to be only mistaken men. Ah! brethren, a great deal of mischief has been done in this world by "only mistaken men," and generally speaking the doctrines of mistaken men tend to ruin, and that is all we mean by "pernicious."

VI. St. Peter next declares that "by reason of these the way of truth is evil spoken of;" and this is true of Brethrenism. Directly a person joins it he begins to "despise others." He cannot see how a man can be good and remain a Churchman, or for that matter a Presbyterian or a Methodist. "How can I remain in the Church of England?" said a young convert to his Sunday School teacher. "I am converted!" And this is just the idea that underlies the whole of their teaching. The way of truth is evil spoken of. They hold most uncharitable views with regard to the great

religious bodies of the day. They declare the Church of England an Apostacy and they declare that "Dissenters (to use their own words) have marshalled themselves in the ranks of the Infidel and the Socinian, and are grasping at all the powers and privileges that the world can give them." These are quotations from their own tracts, and their meaning is plain. All the great anti-papal religious bodies of the day are wrong. No one can be a true Christian and remain in their midst. He must come out of them and break bread with the *brethren*, and then he is a Christian. Some of them may perhaps try to deny this, yet practical results have shown it to be the case, and some of the more outspoken *brethren* declare it to be so. So on this point I bid you beware of these people. Their first cry is "come to Christ," but a little afterwards you will hear the cry, "come out of the Church," and when you go out of the Church you will find yourself no better off. The wear and tear of life will go on just the same as ever, and soon the ardor of excitement will cool down, and you will find yourself in the midst of a hollow, wicked world as before, beset with the same temptations, harassed by the same passions, surrounded by the same evil, and "Brethrenism" no reasonable remedy. Then you are unsettled and at once the "way of truth is evil spoken of." Let us remember that we want religious principles that will last a *life time*, and not only those which serve merely for a passing moment. When first we take up Christ, i. e., when we first take upon ourselves the vows made at our Baptism, if we do it sincerely, everything seems fresh and easy, and the heart whispers to itself that it is not so hard after all to be a Christian; and if death should step in then there would be an easy transit to rest in the Paradise of God. But death does not always come at such convenient times, and after our promises and vows (which seem so easy to keep) are made, we find ourselves back again in the midst of a fascinating, wicked world; and the edge of religious ardor is soon worn away against the many rocks which obstruct the Christian's course. And then after many a mistake, many an error, we settle down with a cool resolve to fight the world the flesh and the devil, calmly and deliberately. To do this we want the help of God, and we want the assistance of man. We want the Lord's Day's rest, the ten commandments and the Lord's Prayer. We want the two great sacraments Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We want the word of God, not *mutilated*, but complete and whole. We want the helping hand of God's Ministry, properly ordained to perform holy functions. We want daily, hourly supplies of the Holy Spirit, and a humble prayerful trust that if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end," (*Heb., iii, 14.*) we shall be saved. Believe me *that* is what we want to see us safely through a life

time full of battles against the never-flagging temptations of the devil. It is not an arrogant, self-righteous confidence that we *must* be right because we *believe* we are. No one believed himself right more strongly than did Saul of Tarsus *before he was converted*, but *after that* his boastful confidence was gone, and we find him clothed with *humility*, trembling lest, after he had preached to others he should himself be a castaway. Faith must not be confounded with an arrogant, self-conceited confidence, for it is possible for a man's faith to be built upon the sand, instead of on the rock. These men will ask you, "have you found Christ?" and you must say, "I have, *I know I have*." It will not do to say, "I trust so," or "I hope I have." If you say that, it is a proof, according to them, that you have no faith. But, my brethren, I would rather have some feeling of humility; I would rather have some of the "Lord I believe, *help thou mine unbelief*," than I would an over-weening confidence that knows no danger or that fears no fall.

The principles of Brethrenism then are not calculated to benefit the Christian world, for let us imagine a moment that they have become successful. Suppose for instance that this whole country was perverted to Brethrenism what would be the result? Why we would at once have a period of religious and civil anarchy; and rule and authority would be broken down. Our blessed Sundays would be brought to the same level as Mondays or Saturdays and no Christian Sabbath would be found throughout the land. Our churches would be closed and our ministry degraded and thrown to the winds. There would be no standard by which to interpret Scripture, but every man might keep or reject what passages he chose. There would be no law against murder, adultery, drunkenness, theft, and such things, for the Christian is *not under the law*. We should hear no more Christ's beautiful prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," &c., and there would be no more calls for God to send his Holy Spirit to guide us in the way of truth. I ask, is a system like that calculated to carry on a war against wickedness and vice? There is such a thing as too much liberty, and when every one is free to do as he chooses every one becomes a tyrant. And Brethrenism would level all ecclesiastical authority and make every man his own monitor and law.—What sort of a country would we have then? No Sabbath bell to warn us that time is flying; no properly authorized men of God to tell us messages from heaven. We should have here what England had in the reign of Oliver Cromwell, when men, grown mad with mistaken zeal, would tie their horses in God's temples, and preach for doctrines the ravings of fanaticism which soon expanded into blasphemy. That is what happened when the regu-

larly ordained ministry were suspended. God's ministers, I know, are not always what they ought to be, for they are men of like passions with all mankind, yet *as a class* they wield a tremendous influence for good. Sweep them away and you open the flood-gates of anarchy, intolerance, misery and sin.

We have to take all these things into account when we hear people talking against the time-honored principles of Christianity, and seeking to bring everything to one common level. Communism will not answer in Christianity any more than in the State, for she must have authority to carry on war to the knife with the bad results of men's wicked passions. Beware, then, of those who come preaching what they call the "Gospel of God," but who "despise government, and are presumptuous, self-willed, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." (2nd Pet., ii., 10.)

I promise, my brethren, to tell you before I closed this series of sermons what truth is, and where it is to be found. Truth is a wonderful thing, hard indeed to define. It is one huge mass made up of ever so many particles. Truth is like the ocean,—all one vast body of water, and get a cup full of it is water the same as the whole vast body. So truth must be looked at in a broad way, or else we shall never see what it really is. There are many truths contained in one grand truth, and yet every one of these truths has to be believed or else we fail to find out truth itself. And this is the principle we have to apply in believing and interpreting Scripture. The Bible is truth. From beginning to end it is truth, and yet it is made up of ever so many particles and each particle is truth. Now we have to believe the whole truth, and also *each particle of truth which goes to make up the whole*. And this, my brethren, you have been taught to do. The church of England teaches you to grasp truth, and also *all truths*, which together make up truth itself. There are some passages of Scripture which seem to oppose one another. Now to believe *one* of these is easy, but to believe *both together* is the way to grasp truth, and that is the way we are taught. Scripture says, for instance, that our blessed Lord is man. It says also that he is God. Each of these is a truth. The Unitarian believes *only one*. He says that the Scripture declares Christ to be man. So it does. But it also teaches that he is God. So we try to believe as it is written, our Lord is God *and* man. One religious body of the day teaches predestination; another, man's free agency. Now "predestination" is plainly taught in the Bible. It is a truth, and those who hold it are right; but they are wrong in not acknowledging the other to be a truth. The Scripture plainly teaches man's free-agency. It is a truth, and they who hold it are right, but they are wrong in rejecting predestination. Put both together, and believe *both together* (which

we are taught to do,) and we get a combined truth which will stand every test of Scripture. This is the only fair and proper way to deal with Scripture. We must take *each separate truth* or else we will find ourselves *rejecting a truth*, a thing that is dangerous to do. This is the sort of truth that you are taught. The Prayer Book is Scripture from beginning to end, and everything that is taught in Scripture, the church teaches to-day. She tries to look at everything as a truth in itself. And here it is that Brethrenism makes its mistakes. It grasps a few things which, if taken as parts of a whole are (some of them) truths in themselves; but which, if taken alone, cease to be truths because other passages contradict them. We must then weigh passages together and if two seem to oppose one another, we shall generally find it not very hard to believe both.

And before I close I wish to draw a picture, which I hope you will ever keep before your eyes. There is a member of our church gone to Brethrenism, and now look how he tramples under foot the dearest principles of his former days. I will give you his creed, and you will notice the *negative* throughout:—

1st. I don't believe in the "Apostle's Creed," for that is a device of man, though I remember saying it when I was a child and bowing with reverence at the sacred name of Jesus.

2nd. I don't believe in bishops, elders, (presbyters,) deacons or any other order of ministers, although, indeed, I remember reading of them in the New Testament. 3rd. I don't believe in saying, I am a "miserable sinner" for now I am a happy Christian.

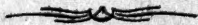
4th. I don't believe in keeping the Sabbath day, though I remember hearing every Sunday that I ought to do so. 5th. I don't believe that I am bound by the ten commandments, for as a Christian I am not under the law. 6th. I don't believe in asking God for his Holy Spirit, although I remember being taught to pray, "Take not thy holy spirit from me." 7th. I don't believe in teaching my children to pray, or even praying with them, although, it is true I remember hearing that "of such is the kingdom of heaven." 8th. I don't believe anybody was ever saved before Christ came, although I remember being taught that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be in heaven. 9th. I don't believe in saying the Lord's Prayer, although I can't forget my dear mother taking my little hands in her's and teaching me that prayer; but she was (much as I revere her memory) mistaken, for no Christian need ever ask for his sins to be forgiven.

Is not that a painful picture? yet I *know* of such a case as that. There is something fascinating in the peculiar tenets of Brethren-

ism, which first misleads and then tends to destroy everything that people had before been taught. And I think now you are faithfully warned, I have been as fair to these people as I possibly could, and be obliged to place their doctrines before you. They attempt a *revival*, but alas it is a revival in the wrong direction. I am no enemy of revivals. I think we are too apt to grow cold in the cause of Christ, and we want something to arouse us to duty; but there are *right ways* of conducting a revival, as perhaps we shall see some day here.*

In the meantime be attentive, my brethren, to your own religious duties, and be not carried about by every wind of doctrine. "Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the *old paths*, where is the good way, and walk therein and *ye shall find rest for your souls*, (Jer. vi., 16,) "Believe not every spirit, but *try the spirits whether they are of God*, FOR THERE ARE FALSE PROPHETS GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD." (1 John, iv, 1.)

THE END.



* I refer to "Church Missions," which have been attended with such good results, wherever they have been tried.